

GSC Research Grants 2021 Request for Applications (RFA)



Graduate Student Council Research Grants Program

An annual, competitive research grants program for graduate students at the University of Mississippi.

Title: Graduate Student Council Research Grants (G01)

Sponsored by: The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the Graduate School at the University of Mississippi.

Coordinated by: The UM Graduate Student Council

Key Dates

RFA Announced: October 26, 2020

Applications Due: **January 11, 2021, by 5:00 pm**

Awards Announced: March 2021

GSC Grants Workshops: Various times

View workshop schedule and sign up at:

<http://research.olemiss.edu/upcoming-presentations>.

*******No late submissions will be accepted*******

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Part I. Overview

Purpose

Through this RFA, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP), in coordination with the Graduate School and the Graduate Student Council (GSC), solicits applications from currently enrolled graduate students in any discipline. GSC Research Grants are funded ORSP and the Graduate School (hereafter, “the UM Sponsors”).

Program goals:

- 1) Increase marketability, competitiveness, and graduate/postgraduate opportunities of UM graduate students by helping them develop a record of writing and winning grants.
- 2) Increase the number of proposals from, and awards for, UM students to fund graduate research, study, and creative scholarship.
- 3) Expand the ability of UM graduate students to conduct research, creative, or innovation projects to a degree that would not be possible with departmental funds alone.

Timeline and Funding

The Sponsors will award up to twenty grants of up to \$1,000 each in Spring 2021 for projects to be conducted between May 2021 and April 2022. Applications requesting more than \$1,000 will be returned without review, as will those with total project costs exceeding \$1,000 that fail to list the committed sources (departmental, personnel, etc.) of funding for costs above the \$1,000 grant.

Each application will contain two main parts: a proposal to conduct a project at UM (the *Internal GSC Project*); and a proposal to prepare and submit an application to an appropriate External Funding Opportunity that the applicant has identified. The awarded funds will be spent on the Internal GSC Project. However, as a condition of the award, the Awardee will also be required to prepare and submit (or already have prepared and submitted) between September 2020 and April 2022 a compliant, on-time application to the identified External Opportunity (*External Funding Proposal*). The Internal GSC Project and the External Funding Proposal may be related to each other, but do not have to be, and the Internal GSC Project should be for a scope of work accomplishable within the \$1,000 budget.

Principal Investigator (PI) Eligibility

UM (Oxford) graduate students from any discipline that conducts research, creative scholarship, or innovation activities are eligible to apply, as long as they are enrolled in good standing in a UM graduate program, have never received a GSC Research Grant in the past, and are planning to be enrolled in the fall 2021 semester. Students expecting to graduate in summer 2021 are *not eligible* for this opportunity. Applicants must attend one offering of a one-hour GSC Grants workshop that has been scheduled for various dates in Fall 2021. Students can view the workshop schedule and sign up at <http://www.research.olemiss.edu/upcoming-presentations>. The graduate student/applicant will be the Principal Investigator on the project. No more than one graduate student may serve as a PI per application/award (no multi-student projects), and each graduate student may submit only one application.

Part II. The Funding

Eligible costs

Funds may be used for research or presentation supplies, travel directly related to field research, participant support costs, equipment that will be owned by the university, and costs directly related to essential technical support.

Examples of ELIGIBLE costs include (but are not limited to):

- Research supplies, such as chemicals, sample bags, software etc.
- Presentation supplies & contracted expenses (e.g.: poster-board, printing charges)
- Travel expenses related to field work
- Upgrades to existing university computers (memory, graphics cards)
- Gift cards to incentivize research study participation
- Wages and fringes for undergraduate student research assistants
- Transcription services
- Computing devices that will be owned by the university

Ineligible costs

GSC Research funds may NOT be applied to educational expenses, travel to professional meetings/conferences, self-education projects/programs, or food for persons. Generally, the award amount will not be enough to buy equipment. However, there are some categories of items that the university considers equipment regardless of purchase price (<https://procurement.olemiss.edu/definitions/>). Any purchased equipment will need to be tagged for inventory purposes by the Office of Procurement services, and added to the equipment inventory of the student's academic department. Applicants must demonstrate in their proposal budgets and budget justifications that they understand all applicable UM procurement and spending policies and guidelines, and, along with their Advisors and Departmental Points of Contact, must exercise responsibility for ensuring all expenditures comply with UM Policy. (To learn about procurement policies and guidelines, see <https://procurement.olemiss.edu/>). Applicants with questions about eligible costs may direct those questions to the GSC Point of Contact listed in Part VI of this RFA; award recipients may direct their cost questions to their Advisor or Departmental Point of Contact.

Part III. The Application

General Rules

Applications must have at least 1" inch margins on all sides, and should use Times New Roman or Arial, font size 12 or 11 for all narrative text. Smaller text sizes may be used for tables and graphics, so long as they are still legible. Incomplete, late, improperly formatted, or otherwise noncompliant applications will be returned without review.

Content and Form of Application

Application Document Consisting of the following sections:

Summary (1 page maximum)

The summary should consist of three clearly labeled sections: 1) Overview (1-4 sentences summarizing who you are, including graduate program and your standing and year in the program, and what you are going to do in your GSC project); 2) Intellectual Merit (summarizing why the project is important to the field itself, and any methods to be used); and 3) External Opportunity (summarizing the external opportunity that you intend to apply to, including sponsor name, program name, potential funding amount and application due date, and how it will benefit your academic career).

If your application is awarded, this Summary is what will be shared on the GSC web page, so be sure to write it in a way that is understandable to those in other disciplines, define terms where necessary, and explain issues clearly.

GSC Project Research Strategy: (4 pages maximum)

Describe the Internal GSC Project. You may include such information as: the overall goal of the work, the two or three objectives or specific aims for this project, the methodology to be employed, any activities to be undertaken, the significance and relevance to the field and to your academic career, the novelty of the approach, how you intend to disseminate the results, risks and mitigation strategies, and/or any broader impacts to society or the institution anticipated. Briefly list any facilities, equipment or other resources you will have at your disposal (and intend to use) in the completion of the described project, as appropriate.

COVID-19 Contingency Plan: (1/2 page maximum)

If any or all of your proposed activities are contingent on the relaxing of restrictions that are currently in place to slow the spread of COVID-19, provide a “Plan B” that tells how you will conduct the project if those restrictions are still in place during your project period. For example, if you are proposing human subjects research, describe how you would conduct interactions with the human subjects in a way that complies with social distancing directives of the university. Or, if your research requires travel or field work, tell how that could be done WITHOUT the travel, or what your plan is to request a waiver, and why you think that waiver will be granted. Or, if your project cannot be reasonably adapted to comply with COVID-19 mitigation restrictions, say that.

GSC Project Deliverables and Timeline (1 page maximum)

List any items, products, accomplishments, findings, results, and/or disseminations that you expect to result from your project. Give a timeline illustrating in what months or quarters of the award year (*between May 2021 and April 2022*) you plan for the efforts supported by the grant to be carried out.

GSC Project Budget and Budget Justification (1 page maximum)

Detailed Budget

List supplies, commodities, travel, and other research related expenses you are requesting and the

estimated cost of each. Pay careful attention to ensure all proposed expenses are compliant with this RFA and with the University's spending and reimbursement policies.

Budget Justification

Include a paragraph describing why each of these costs is necessary for the project.

Current and Pending Support

Detail all sources of current or committed funding (including graduate assistantships) to conduct this project. For proposed projects whose total costs exceed \$1,000, show how the additional costs (over the \$1,000 GSC award) will be met. If additional costs for the Internal GSC Project are to come from an award you hope to receive as a result of the External Funding Proposal, be sure to delineate which aspects of the Internal GSC Project can be completed, regardless of whether an External Award results.

External Opportunity Overview: (1 page)

Describe the external opportunity that you plan to apply for (or have very recently applied for). This could be a scholarship, a graduate or post-graduate fellowship, a travel award, or some other type of grant to the institution that will result in an opportunity for you, perhaps through a graduate assistantship. Be sure to include all of the following information, where applicable: sponsor name, program name, due date, type of funding (e.g., scholarship, fellowship, grant, etc.), maximum amount of award (and how much you plan to ask for), eligible costs (for what you are allowed to use the money), who receives the award (the student or the institution), who submits the application (the student or the institution), eligibility requirements, anticipated duration of the award (start and end dates), review criteria, anticipated number of awards, and any other relevant information we should be aware of. Please provide a URL link to the opportunity, and also tell us how you learned about the external opportunity. NOTE: the sponsor must NOT be UM or a unit within UM.

External Opportunity Plan (1 page)

Describe your plan for competing for this opportunity. If you have already submitted an application for the opportunity, but have not yet learned of the result, you can count that—tell us what you proposed. (If you already know the result of the previous external submission, however, you may NOT count it here; you must identify an additional external opportunity.) You may wish to include such information as: an overview of the project or theme of your proposal/application (which may or may not be directly related to the proposed GSC Research Project); a timeline for developing and submitting your proposal; a draft plan for how you will spend the award money, in accordance with the opportunity guidelines; and how this opportunity, if funded, will impact your own academic or career trajectory, whether at University of Mississippi, some other institution, or beyond. If a graduate advisor is required, who will serve as yours?

References Cited: (no page limit)

Use the citation style that is customary in your discipline (APA, MLA, etc.) and be consistent.

Biographical Sketch: (Suggested: 2 pages)

Include a biographical sketch—preferably in the prescribed format of the sponsor of your identified External Funding Opportunity; if no such format is prescribed, you might consider using the NIH format or the NSF format.

Short Student Bio: (125 words or less)

In 125 words or less, using first person (“I”), describe yourself. For instance, you might list your hometown, and discuss your educational background, your research interests, or your future career goals. If selected for an award, this Bio will appear on the GSC web page and may be used in other public-facing communications about this program.

Hi Resolution Head Shot Photograph

Any smartphone will take a high-enough resolution photo for this purpose. Find a friend, a well-lit area, and a blank wall to use as a background (a brick wall, for instance), and have the friend take a picture of you from the chest or shoulders up. Or, if social distancing requirements dictate, take a selfie instead. If you want a more professional looking head shot, try University Communications. You can fill out a Photo Request form here: <https://communications.olemiss.edu/> (charges may apply). Or, you may be eligible for a free photo during "Snappy Hour").

“Snappy Hour,” when university photographers will capture portraits for faculty and staff members free of charge, (currently by appointment only, during the COVID-19 pandemic). Appointments are available from 9-11 a.m. every Monday. To schedule an appointment, email [Kevin Bain](#), Manager of Digital Imaging Services. Please note that University Marketing & Communications staff will follow all appropriate safety protocols. If selected for an award, this head shot will be used on the GSC web page or possibly in other university communications describing your award.

Terms of Agreement Form

Completed and signed by the Applicant, the Advisor, and any other Departmental Point of Contact for financial administration (e.g., the Chairperson’s Administrative Assistant).

Submission Requirements

Your proposal will be submitted as two documents: 1) the Summary (in MS Word or PDF format) and 2) the Body—all other required proposal sections and components, combined into PDF document. All applications must be submitted by the posted deadline via the InfoReady Review Portal (hereafter simply “the Portal”) at <http://olemiss.infoready4.com>. Sign in using your University of Mississippi Login. Once signed in to the Portal, select “Graduate Student Council (GSC) Grants 2021” under the “Student Competitions” category of Open Competitions, then click the Submit Application button to initiate your application. Upload the Summary and Body documents, complete all other fields, and click Submit Application before the deadline. When your proposal has been accepted for review, you will receive an e-mail acknowledgement.

Part IV. The Review**Review and Selection Process**

ORSP will conduct a preliminary review of the applications for completeness and compliance. Incomplete and noncompliant applications will be declined and not forwarded for scoring. Compliant

applications will be accepted, and, if practical, each application will be assigned to up to two faculty reviewers drawn from the same broad discipline as (but a different home department from) the applicant: 1) Arts, Humanities, Journalism & New Media; 2) Social Sciences and Education; 3) Business, Law, and Accounting; 4) Physical and Life Sciences; and 5) Math, Computer Science, and Engineering. Once the reviews and scoring are complete, the UM Sponsors will select which applications to fund, based on the scores of the reviewers and the disciplines represented. ORSP will let the applicants know the results of the competition. All applicants will then be able to use the Portal to review the scores and any comments provided by the reviewers, whose identities will not be shared with the applicants.

Review Criteria (maximum of 50 points)

GSC Research Project: Merit (10 points)

Does the narrative make a compelling case that the proposed work will advance knowledge and understanding in a way that complements, or fills a gap in, work that has come before? What is the novelty or originality of the proposed work?

GSC Research Project: Soundness of Plan (10 points)

Does the narrative make a compelling case that the project will be completed as proposed within the project period, using the resources available? Are potential risks identified, and are contingencies in place to mitigate those risks? Is the COVID-19 Contingency Plan reasonable?

Overall Clarity (10 points)

Are all aspects of the proposal compelling, easy to understand by non-experts in the field, and grammatically correct?

External Opportunity: Merit (10 points)

Is it clear that the applicant has researched and understands all the key requirements of the external opportunity? Is the opportunity appropriate for the student's stage and program of study? Does it have the potential to be impactful to the student's academic career?

External Opportunity: Soundness of Plan (10 points)

Given what was written, how likely does it seem that the student will be able to develop and submit an on-time, compliant application or proposal? How competitive is the proposal likely to be?

Part V. The Award

Accessing Grant Funds

Upon award notification, and once the student applicant and their advisor have provided evidence of having completed the appropriate CITI responsible conduct of research training module, and once an IRB protocol has been approved (or exemption granted) for projects involving human subject research, or an IACUC protocol approved for projects involving research animals, ORSP will transfer the awarded funds into a research overhead account maintained and managed by the Advisor or a Departmental Point of Contact on behalf of the Awardee. For more information about university-allowable costs, see UM Procurement Services at <http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/procurement/>, or ask your Advisor or other

Departmental Point of Contact. For travel, the recipient should work with the Departmental Point of Contact to ensure proper authorizations are in place at least five days before the travel takes place. For additional information, see the agreement document or contact the Departmental Point of Contact. Awardees who experience administrative difficulties that cannot be solved in a timely manner by their Advisor or Departmental Point of Contact should seek assistance from Dr. Robert Doerksen, Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

Reports

All awardees will be required to present a 1-2 page mid-term progress report, highlighting progress made on the project and expenses incurred, to the GSC point of contact by December 15th, 2021, and a final report by April 30, 2022. The GSC will share these reports with the Graduate School and ORSP by May 15, 2022, and serve as the collecting agent for overdue reports. Awardees with unfinished projects as of April 30, 2022 should submit a progress report by that time, and request a no-cost extension to complete the project no later than July 31, 2022, at which time the final report will be due.

Presentations

Recipients will be required to participate in the UM Three Minute Thesis Competition, organized by the Graduate School, in Fall 2021 and Fall 2022 (if enrolled). Recipients will also be required to present a poster or talk in the Spring 2022 Graduate Research Symposium organized by the GSC, if enrolled in that semester.

Publications

Any publications (including conference presentations and peer-reviewed papers) resulting from GSC-sponsored research should include an appropriate acknowledgement of receipt of a *University of Mississippi Graduate Student Council Research Grant*. Copies of all such publications and news of all such events and presentations should be included with the final progress report, to be sent to the GSC Point of Contact.

Part VI. Contact Information

Questions about the application process may be directed to Mr. Jason Hale in ORSP at gscgrants@olemiss.edu. The UM Point of Contact for issue escalation and resolution is Dr. Robert Doerksen, Associate Dean of the Graduate School (rjd@olemiss.edu).

Part VII. Application Checklist

A completed application packet consists of the following four components/documents, each of which should be uploaded into the Portal:

The Application

One Summary document (MS Word preferred, or PDF acceptable)

One Body document, as a single PDF file, as detailed in Part III, Section 2, including:

- GSC Project Research Strategy (4 pages)
- GSC Project Deliverables and Timeline (1 page)
- GSC Project Budget and Budget Justification (1 page)
- External Opportunity Overview (1 page)

- External Opportunity Plan (1 page)
- References Cited (no page limit)
- Biographical Sketch (2 pages)

Headshot Photograph (Hi Res)

Short Student Bio (125 words or less)

Signed Terms of Agreement Form

The Terms of Agreement form on the next page should be printed, signed, scanned, and uploaded to the InfoReady portal along with your other application documents.

The University of Mississippi - GSC Research Award Application 2021 Terms of Agreement

Last Name:	First Name:	Middle Initial:
Department:	Student ID #:	
Home Address:	Work Address:	
Home Phone:	Work Phone:	
Email:	Supervisor (Advisor):	

Research Overhead Account to Receive Funds:

Account must start with 2502, and cannot be a Startup Account. To request an overhead account be created, the Advisor may e-mail accounting@olemiss.edu.

Contact Information will be used solely for contacting awardees.

Research Fund Terms

1. The **Awardee** will use the funds only for those things outlined in their budget proposal, based on the Graduate Student Research Program Guidelines and compliant with University rules and regulations. All receipts must be saved in case an inquiry is made in this regard.
2. The **Awardee**, in collaboration with their **Advisor** as necessary, and with ORSP as required, will develop and submit a compliant, on-time proposal/application for the external opportunity identified.
3. The **Awardee** will submit a 1-2 page mid-term progress report via the InfoReady Review portal, or by email to gscgrants@olemiss.edu, by **Dec. 15, 2021**, describing the items purchased with the funds, a summary of what work was accomplished in the GSC research project, publishable results, if any, and a status of the application to the external opportunity. A progress report form will be available on the GSC website for all awardees.
4. The **Awardee** will submit a 1-2 page final report by April 30, 2022.
5. If still enrolled, the **Awardee** will participate in the UM 3MT competition in the Fall 2021 semester, and prepare a poster for presentation in the Graduate Research Symposium to be held in the Spring 2022 semester.
6. The **Awardee's** name, project summary, short bio, headshot photo, and progress report will be published on the GSC webpage, and possibly in other University communications describing the program or award.
7. It is the responsibility of the **Awardee** to disclose if he or she received a GSC Research Award grant in the past and other relevant information as mentioned above. Failure to do so will result in the rejection of the application and in no reimbursement.

Applicant's Certification

I understand and accept the terms and conditions set forth by the Graduate Student Research Program.

Applicant Signature

Date

Advisor's Certification

I certify that I am the graduate advisor of the applicant, and that I understand and approve this proposal. I affirm that the applicant is enrolled in the graduate program of study indicated. If the applicant is selected as an Awardee, I will ensure that the awarded funds are made available to the Awardee for the purposes of completing the GSC research project as described, and spent in accordance with university policy. I will also work with the Awardee, as necessary, on the development of the application to the External Opportunity identified, in compliance with all applicable UM policies. In the event that the Awardee or the department is unable to fulfill these responsibilities, I understand that the award will be withdrawn, and will work with ORSP and the Graduate School to return any and all awarded funds.

Advisor Signature

Date

Departmental Point of Contact Certification

I will serve as the Departmental Point of Contact for financial administration of any award resulting from this application. In this role, I will work with ORSP to get the awarded dollars transferred into an account for the use of this project only. I will work with the Awardee, in consultation with the Advisor, to make sure that funds can be accessed to execute the project, in accordance with university spending policies.

Departmental Point of Contact Signature

Date